



Middle School boys construct a shelter at recent Farm Day at Bold Branch Farm.

THE NEWSLETTER OF
NEW COVENANT SCHOOLS

QUID NOVI

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WHAT DOES READING READINESS REALLY MEAN?

by Marion Patterson, Grammar School Principal

Since at least 1996, New Covenant Schools has used a test called Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning Readiness as a means to help parents decide just when their children are ready for formal instruction. This tool, mercifully referred to as DIAL, evaluates the motor skills, conceptual understandings and the language development of children from ages 2 through 6. It also looks at self-help, social, and self-regulation skills.

In recent years, following the implementation of the 4th edition of DIAL, New Covenant teachers attended a talk on school readiness given by Gloria Maccow, PhD, and sponsored by Pearson Clinical. The speaker began with an overview of school readiness before focusing on reading and other components. Citing a 2002 study by Raver and Knitzer, she stated, “Across a range of studies, the emotional, social, and behavioral competence of young children (such as higher levels of self-control and lower levels of acting

out) predicts their academic performance in first grade, over and above their cognitive skills and family backgrounds.”

It seems that science supports the notion we share at New Covenant that moral readiness leads to success in school. In the preschool years, children learn to trust and obey their parents and others who care for them, and to respect the rights of others, including their peers. To do these two things, they must learn to inhibit some of their impulses and to act in ways that don’t always come naturally. These self-regulation skills help students attend to instruction when they might prefer to play and to practice letters even when they seem hard.

Concurrent with development in social skills, many language skills are acquired in the preschool years. Understanding what others say (receptive language) is one of the first steps to reading readiness. As children hear parents and others talk to them—

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WHAT'S NEW?

Tours for Prospective Families

Do you have a friend interested in attending New Covenant Schools? Prospective families are invited to join **Headmaster Heaton** in the lobby to visit our classrooms and view our campus on Thursday mornings. Classes are filling for next year’s term and early applications are encouraged, especially in Kindergarten and grades rising to 7. Visitors may schedule a tour by visiting our website through this link <https://www.newcovenantschools.org/admissions/schedule-a-tour/>. The site allows guests to choose a day suitable to their schedule. Additionally, **Linda Simon** is happy to answer any questions and welcome our guests. For more information, contact her at lsimon@newcovenantschools.org.

H O N O R A R I A

VIOLINIST JOEL NG PERFORMS IN REGIONAL ORCHESTRA

Joel Ng placed 8th of 82 high school age violinists who auditioned for the Virginia Band and Orchestra Director's South-Central Virginia Senior Regional Orchestra. He performed in the first violin section on Saturday, November 11, at Harrisonburg High School in Harrisonburg.



Joel Ng and strings instructor Mrs. Angell.

FALL ATHLETIC AWARD HONORS AND RECIPIENTS

ALL-CONFERENCE SELECTIONS

ADORA HAMPTON – 1st Team (Conference

Player of the Year) – Volleyball

BRIELLE WALKER – 1st Team – Volleyball

JOCELYN WALKER – 1st Team – Volleyball

EVAN BOSAK – 1st Team – Soccer

BREEZY KNIGHT – 1st Team – Tennis

MICHAEL SECKMAN – 1st Team – Cross-Country

GIA BARLOW – 1st Team – Cross-Country

LUCAS GORMAN – 2nd Team – Soccer

JAMES BROPHY – 2nd Team – Soccer

RUSTY HOOKS – 2nd Team – Soccer

CHARLOTTE MORSE – 2nd Team – Volleyball

OLIVIA KIDD – 2nd Team – Tennis

SCHOOL RECORDS AND HONORS

ADORA HAMPTON

- School Record with Career Kills with over 700
- School Record with Career Aces with over 230
- School Record with Single Season Aces with over 115
- School Record with Season Kills with over 330
- Top 20 in the State of Virginia in Kills
- 2nd in the State of Virginia in Aces

JOCELYN WALKER

- School Record in Career Assists with over 1,000
- School Record in Season Assists with over 700

BRIELLE WALKER

- Earned a spot on volleyball banner with over 500 Career Kills

MICHAEL SECKMAN

- School record in cross-country time with 18:06

LUCAS GORMAN

- Earned a spot on soccer banner with 55 Career Goals/Assists

EVAN BOSAK

- School Record for Single Season Soccer Goals with 29
- Earned a spot on soccer banner with 70 Career Goals/Assists

FUNDRAISING REPORT

	GOAL	RECEIVED
Annual Fund/Permanent Things	\$100,000	\$11,821
General Scholarship	\$10,000	\$4,836
Scholarship Foundation	\$300,000	<i>Pledged</i> \$149,100 <i>Received</i> \$54,051

Please consider New Covenant Schools in your giving. All gifts are tax-deductible to the extent that the law provides. Donations may be given through cash, check, stock transfers, or IRA distributions. Contact **Dayna Renalds** in the Development Office for more information.

E T C E T E R A

EVERYONE

SPIRIT STORE

New Covenant's annual Spirit Store is open now through **November 22**. Click the link to shop athletic apparel and support Gryphon athletics. Please be reminded this apparel is not uniform approved but can be worn to extracurricular activities and by parents and students outside of school. <https://ncswinter2023.itemorder.com/>

PROGRESS REPORTS

Progress reports will be sent via email on **Friday, November 17**.

THANKSGIVING BREAK

School will break for Thanksgiving from **Monday, November 20 – Friday, November 24**. Students will return on **Monday, November 27**.

REMIND APP TEST

New Covenant will be conducting a test of our Remind Emergency Notification System on **November 14** at approximately 9:50am. This is just a test and no action is required by parents.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

New Covenant is in urgent need of substitute teachers. If you are available during the school day, please consider

being a substitute teacher. If interested, go to the "Join Our Team" page on the school website and submit a faculty application online, omitting the essays.

TEACHERS' FAVORITES

Each year faculty and staff fill out a favorites sheet listing interests, hobbies, favorite foods, etc. If you would like a copy of a teacher's favorites list, please check the **resource documents** section of the app, or stop by the lobby desk and ask to see the Favorites Book.

TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TAP)

The tuition assistance program (TAP) for 2024-25 school year is accepting applications through **January 15**. There is high demand for assistance, and it is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis, so apply early! Go to <https://online.factsmgt.com/aid> apply. See email sent on **October 31** for details and instructions.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

MIDDLE SCHOOL FALL FESTIVAL

WHEN: Friday, November 17, 1:30pm.
WHAT TO WEAR: Long, loose athletic pants/jeans, shirt in the color of your team (teams will be posted near MS classrooms soon), athletic shoes which you don't mind getting dirty. The event includes activities planned by the 8th Grade Council. More details to come!

MS DRAMA TRYOUTS

Dialectic Drama tryouts will be held in the library at **3:30pm on Wednesday, December 6** for 5th and 6th grade and **Friday, December 8** for 7th and 8th grade. The tryouts will last approximately an hour.



About 35 New Covenant dads enjoyed the Men's Retreat at Bold Branch Farm over the weekend. Thank you to Adam Miller, Scott Speakes, Ben Hinson, and Mike Sharrett for organizing a great event.

FACE IT—YOU'RE GOING TO PAY TAXES

They might come out of your monthly paycheck or a check you write to the state on April 15. We all pay taxes. **What if you could steer your tax money towards New Covenant Schools?** I'm talking about taking ownership of how your tax money is spent. **THIS IS WORTH YOUR ATTENTION.** The New Covenant Schools Scholarship Foundation under the provision of the Virginia Education Improvement Scholarship Tax Credits Program provides for a 65% tax credit against your state income taxes when making a gift for scholarship purposes. This is effectively like a coupon to be used against a yearly tax bill. Additionally, those who itemize are allowed to deduct the remaining 35% on federal

taxes as a charitable contribution. This provision effectively allows you to "redirect" much (if not all!) of your state tax bill for the benefit of New Covenant Schools and our students. The Foundation distributes its funds to qualifying students (those entering K or 1st grade or transferring) yearly. Currently, over 60 students at New Covenant benefit from scholarships received from the Foundation. For more information on this program or to get started, contact **Dayna Renalds** at drenalds@newcovenantschools.org. She will be happy to hear from you.

NEW COVENANT SCHOOLS SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

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whether it's about daily activities and routines or shapes in puffy clouds—they build their understanding of how language works and stash a storehouse of words for later use. They begin to use expressive language effectively, to speak in complete thoughts, and to toss about a growing tally of words. As all this unbridled development is going on, they should also be getting very familiar with books and seeing for themselves that books contain people's talk written down. When these pre-reading skills are well-formed, instruction in recognizing and naming letters can begin in earnest. Letters are the bricks and mortar foundation for literacy.

This same sequence, from receptive to expressive language, continues throughout the years of formal schooling. In the Grammar School, we emphasize listening to books read aloud, with the aim of teaching children how language works in an increasingly complex sense, moving from letters and words to the structure of sentences, paragraphs, stories, chapters, and novels. Comprehending these as they are read aloud both precedes and accompanies reading them, as auditory

skills support reading across the curriculum. In our approach to teaching writing, we apply the same principles. Students listen to, or depending upon their level, read a paragraph (receptive language), retell it to the class (expressive language), and then rewrite it in their own words (expressive language, written down). These carefully thought-out processes loop and overlap as students' receptive and expressive abilities grow.

As students progress from Grammar to Middle School, we continue to find that social and self-regulative skills predict academic success. In the language arts, learners will still hear great literature read aloud and will read it for themselves—both orally and silently. They will talk through what they read, and increasingly they will write about what they have read, incorporating a variety of sources, and beginning to reason effectively. In the School of Rhetoric, poetry and drama are relished as arts that must be heard; they continue to shape students' understanding of the inner workings of language. Broad reading across disciplines, in-depth discussion, and instruction in rhetoric

yield clear, concise, and increasingly creative writing.

All this starts at home, with the simple act of talking and a warm lap for reading books. At school, it falls to us to continue to build on parents' foundational efforts to shape children who are morally ready to learn and well-equipped for academic success at every level.

QUID NOVI

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Class of 2024 • Mike Lovell • Class of 2025
Neil Bohnert • Leslie Moeller • Bob Price
Leland Seckman • Dan Vollmer
Class of 2026 • John Gauger • Nancy Hall
Chris Misiano • Sam Mizener • Tom Rogers
Anne Umbarger

EX OFFICIO

John Heaton—Headmaster
Eric Parker—School Warden

OUR MISSION

New Covenant Schools is an educational community serving families of Central Virginia, providing an exceptional education in a classical curriculum within the framework of historic Christianity, furnishing the student with the tools of education and the inspiration to be a lifelong learner.

NEW COVENANT SCHOOLS

NEW COVENANT SCHOOLS

THINK. LEARN. LOVE. LIVE.

2024 – 2025 Academic Calendar – Key Dates

New Covenant Schools sets its academic calendar as far in advance as is reasonably foreseeable.
This list is subject to change for unforeseen events.

Monday, August 12	School of Rhetoric First Day of School , 8am Grammar & Middle School Meet Your Teacher , 3:30-6pm
Wednesday, August 14	PreK – 8th Grade First Day of School (12pm dismissal for PreK, K – 1 st Grade)
Monday, September 2	NO SCHOOL, Labor Day
Monday – Wednesday, October 14-16	NO SCHOOL, Fall Break
Friday, November 1	NO SCHOOL, K-12 Parent/Teacher Conferences
Monday – Friday, November 25-29	NO SCHOOL, Thanksgiving Break
Thursday, December 19	11am Dismissal, Christmas Break Begins
Friday – Friday, December 20 – January 3, 2025	NO SCHOOL, Christmas Break
Monday, January 6	Students Return
Monday – Tuesday, January 6-14	J Term in School of Rhetoric
Wednesday, January 15	School of Rhetoric Students Do Not Attend
Monday, January 20	NO SCHOOL, Martin Luther King Day
Thursday – Monday, February 13-17	NO SCHOOL, Winter Break
Monday – Friday, March 17-21	NO SCHOOL, Spring Break
Thursday, April 17	12pm Dismissal, Easter Break Begins
Friday – Monday, April 18-21	NO SCHOOL, Easter Break
Monday, May 5	NO SCHOOL, May Breather
Thursday, May 22	Kindergarten Graduation
Thursday, May 22	School of Rhetoric Last Day (3pm Dismissal)
Friday, May 23	Middle School Last Day (12pm Dismissal)
Friday, May 23	Grammar School Last Day (12pm Dismissal)
Saturday, May 24	Graduation
Monday – Saturday, May 26-31	Senior Trip

